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TAGS: [IR](#) [PREL](#) [IZ](#) [JO](#)

SUBJECT: ROYAL COURT CHIEF AWADALLAH TELL S/I SATTERFIELD
JORDAN STILL SKEPTICAL REGARDING IRAQ

Classified By: Ambassador David M. Hale for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

[¶1.](#) (C) Summary: In a discussion with Royal Court Chief Bassem Awadallah on April 17, Senior Advisor to the Secretary and Coordinator for Iraq (S/I) Ambassador David Satterfield urged Jordan to consider the significant accomplishments the Baghdad government has made recently, particularly the response to events in Basra, and to consider returning an ambassador to Baghdad in order to better understand and support on-going positive developments in Iraq. Awadallah said Jordan was skeptical, having not observed significant change by the Maliki government, and he believed this view was also held by the Saudis, the Emiratis, and others in the region. Awadallah said Jordan was concerned about being taken by surprise by possible U.S. actions with respect to Iran. End summary.

Maliki Stronger for Having Taken Action in Basra

[¶2.](#) (C) In a meeting with Awadallah joined by the Ambassador, S/I Satterfield reviewed recent developments in Iraq, including GOI moves in Basra against the Jaysh Al-Mahdi which had strengthened Maliki's position internally, and discussed the likelihood of lessening violence, noting that a reduction in violence would facilitate a significant opportunity for political reconciliation. Emphasizing that the improved situation in Iraq is tenuous and could still be reversed, he stressed the significance of recent developments, saying that the changes that have taken place in the last few weeks would never have been predicted six to nine months ago.

[¶3.](#) (C) Satterfield said the political center of gravity had now shifted. While the GOI had achieved something less than a clear military victory, the act of challenging the militias had very significantly improved Maliki's position) and that of the GOI - with the public. He is stronger domestically, and should be reaping rewards externally as well, but so far this support has not been forthcoming. Maliki had gone after criminal and rogue elements of the Jaysh al-Mahdi (JAM) Shia militia, but in his view, no one in the region has acknowledged the efforts.

The Time for an Independent Jordan-Iraq Relationship

[¶4.](#) (C) Satterfield highlighted the political evolution in Iraq, including legislation such as the budget, the provincial powers law, and amnesty laws, significant for the internal compromises that occurred between and within the various blocs, as much as for the actual substance of the laws.

[¶5.](#) (C) Satterfield pressed Awadallah for Jordan to establish a strategic relationship with Iraq and stressed the need for regional Arab friends and allies to help Iraq, specifically

by establishing diplomatic representation in Baghdad.

Jordan Remains Skeptical; Still Not Seeing the Progress

¶16. (C) Awadallah expressed appreciation for the continuing dialogue on Iraq, and said Jordan too was hoping for success. He noted that King Abdullah had previously met with General Petraeus to discuss Iraq issues, but said that Jordan remained skeptical, not seeing the improvements that Satterfield had described. He said the King had also just met with the Saudis on this topic, and that no one in the region seemed convinced that any of the benchmarks set for the Maliki government were being met. Awadallah also noted that while the Arab neighbors were being urged to reach out to Maliki, they were not seeing Maliki reaching out to them; all the relationships seemed to be through the United States.

Pressing for an Arab Diplomatic Presence

¶17. (C) Satterfield responded that the U.S. was working with Maliki to encourage progress on the issues of concern to Jordan, and countered that expanded Arab diplomatic representation in Baghdad would be an opportunity for the regional neighbors to see for themselves the political and security progress being made. He said the U.S. presence in Iraq allowed the U.S. to observe the improving dynamics every day. Only Iran, among regional states, was in a similar position and this should not be acceptable to Iraq's Arab neighbors.

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Jordanians Concerned about Iran and Future U.S. Plans

¶18. (S) Awadallah expressed concern that as a friend to the U.S., Jordan simply was not comfortable that it had all the information it needed, did not have a clear picture of U.S. thoughts regarding Iran, nor U.S. policies toward the Palestinians, and was concerned that with the upcoming political transition in the U.S., there might be policies or actions taken that could take Jordan by surprise. Satterfield replied that he would relay Jordan's concerns to Washington, and the U.S. would certainly continue the dialogue with Jordan. He said the U.S. would be prepared to discuss, in detail, U.S. views on Iranian intentions. Satterfield pointed out that a stable, independent Iraq is vital to overall regional security, and neighboring countries simply cannot leave the playing field open to the Iranians.

¶19. (U) This cable has been cleared by Ambassador Satterfield.
HALE